

X.—MEASUREMENTS OF TIGERS SHOT IN THE  
NAGA HILLS*A Correction*

In the proceedings and account Section of Vol. XL. No. 2 I notice you state Mr. Marshall publishes records of tigers shot 'by him' in the Naga hills, Assam. I would like to point out that this is incorrect. The total of 59 animals comprises the bag of many fellow sportsmen to whom I am greatly indebted as well as my own. I am responsible for the game register of this district and have personally measured many of these tigers and can vouch for the accuracy of the figures.

TOWKOK TEA ESTATE,

G. H. L. MARSHALL.

SONARI P.O.

*December 15, 1938.*XI—MIGRATION AND METHODS OF BIRD SNARING IN  
NORTH EAST ARABIA.*(Five text figures).*

From a bird life point of view, Kuwait, and the promontory on which the town lies, would appear to be one of the most interesting spots in the Middle East for the study of migratory birds. I do not profess to be able to explain why this is so, but to my mind Kuwait can be likened to the Northern end of a long narrow corridor or tunnel, through which migratory birds, moving up from South East Arabia and India, along the Western shore of the Persian Gulf, and conversely moving south again (though to a lesser degree), have to pass. Thousands of migratory birds seem to pass over Kuwait town and the strip of coast about twenty miles wide, which stretches south along the Arabian shore.

The phenomenon may have to do with the fact that birds flying to and from Northern climes and the Tropics, and who happen to choose the Western shore of the Persian Gulf for their route, are inclined to hug the sea coast, as being cooler and having more watering places where they can assuage thirst than in the interior.

Certain it is that every variety of migratory bird is so common during the Spring, and to a lesser extent during the Autumn migration, that almost the entire youth population of Kuwait town, and the tribes lying on the coast to the south of it, go in for catching and trapping these birds as a regular pastime.

The birds so caught are sold in the bazaars as playthings to amuse other children, or are eaten, or again are sold to those owning Falcons with the object of providing a change of diet for

these birds in the non-hunting season. The market price is about nine pence for just over four pounds of small dead birds.

On almost every house roof in Kuwait and the villages to the south of it, as well as on the ground in the vicinity of Badawin encampments, one can see small artificial trees, made of clumps of bushes tied together and placed in prominent positions to attract birds in flight. Each of these bushes contains several traps of the type called *Sulāba*, and it is astonishing how many birds are caught and brought down from the house tops by the youth of the city.

Though it is all very heartless and cruel from a Westerner's point of view, I must admit that the sport affords great happiness and joy to thousands of youths, and young boys, who have little else in the world to brighten their drab lives.

The skill with which these young Esaus set their traps and entice birds to come and be caught, has only to be seen to be believed. It is little short of marvellous.

There are three main types of traps used for snaring small birds. They are known as:—

- (1) 'Fakh'
- (2) 'Sulāba'
- (3) 'Sālia'

(1) The 'Fakh' is mostly used for catching the Lesser Kestrel Hawk which appear some years literally in tens of thousands over the town during the end of March and April. These birds are caught with a decoy. A Kestrel is obtained, and tied by both legs to a heavy stone with a strong piece of cord about 2 ft. long, in a place near some trees where the birds are known to roost. All round this bird are placed 'Fakhs', carefully covered with light sand and pegged to the ground, with only a wriggling grub visible. The Hawks seeing the one on the ground circle round



Fig. 1.—Three *Sulāba* traps in an artificial bush made of cut branches of thorn.

and round above it, and eventually settle round about and are caught as they peck at the grub on the trap. The boys, who lie hidden behind a wall or in some shallow pit, then rush out and



Fig. 2.—A 'decoy' Kestrel, tied by the leg and surrounded by carefully covered traps of the *Fakh* type.

capture the flapping bird. The traps are carefully adjusted so that the bird's legs are never broken, but the trap is just too heavy to enable them to fly away with it, although they very often drag the peg out of the ground.

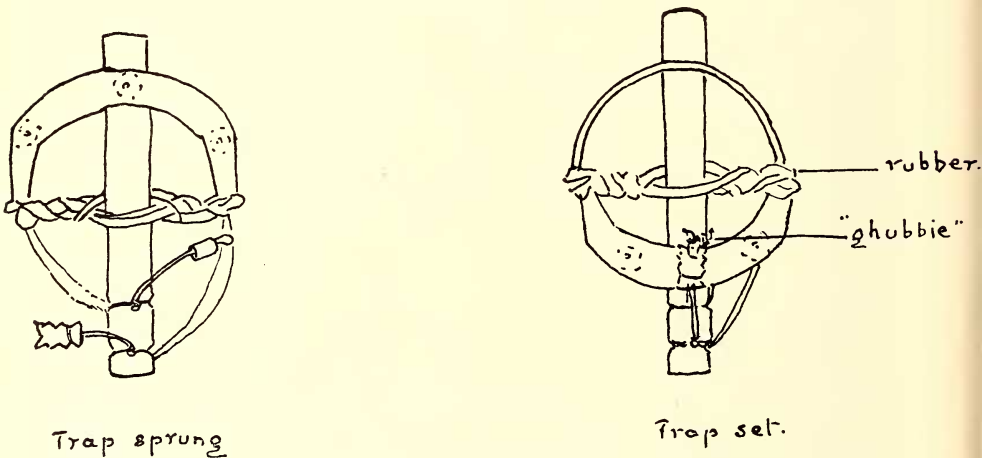


Fig. 3.—*Fakh*.

These lesser Kestrels are a great joy to the boys of Kuwait who walk about with them on their wrists imitating the Sheikh's falconers.

The Oil Company's rig, which has been put up this year some 35 miles South of Kuwait town has attracted these birds to roost on it in thousands.

Shrikes and many other small birds are caught in this trap, when it is placed near a small tree where birds come to settle. The same grub, known locally as a 'ghubbie' is used, but the trap is not pegged down.

(2) The 'Sulaba' is usually placed sticking out above the artificial bushes on the house tops of Kuwait. As many as 6 can

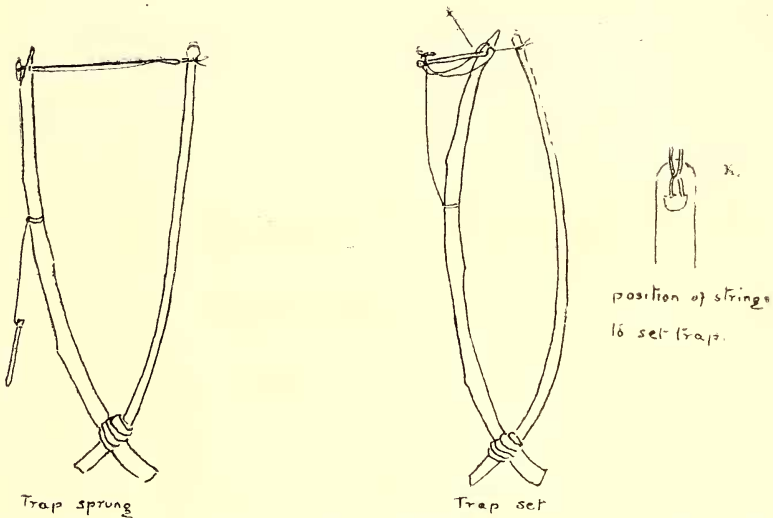


Fig. 4.—Sulāba.

be put into one bush. In the small gardens outside the town these traps may be seen placed against the low mud walls, or perhaps in a bush of flowers or other prominent place. They are not baited, but attract merely as a perch in a land where trees and bushes are scarce. The bird alights on the peg, along which the fine string is carefully arranged, and its feet are caught in the string as the peg falls, and the two sticks spring open.

The bird so caught, if it be a Shrike, has one of its wing feathers removed and passed through its nostril and round its beak twice; this prevents it from opening its mouth. It also has one of its wings twisted, which prevents it flying away. Other varieties of birds have, when caught, one wing only twisted, and then are put into small palm frond baskets and sold in the streets or bazaar.

(3) The 'Salia', or net trap, is the third kind, and is used on trees in the 'Hautas' or gardens of Kuwait. It is composed of a fine fishing net fastened to a curved bamboo frame. This is thrown over a small tree such as a 'Sidr' or Tamarix, and slopes

down to the ground at the back where heavy stones are placed on it. The small birds go to roost in the tree, and in the early



Fig. 5.—The *Salia* trap.

morning are driven down into the net on the ground and picked out.

KUWAIT,

(MRS.) H. R. P. DICKSON,

PERSIAN GULF.

September 20, 1938.

## XII.—BIRDS OBSERVED IN AND NEAR TAMBARAM, SOUTH INDIA.

(Supplementary observations made between April and October 1938 issued as an addendum to the paper published in No. 3, p. 467 of this Volume).

### 7. The Red-vented Bulbul: *Molpastes cafer cafer* (Linn.).

August 11th 1938—nest and 3 eggs in a bauhinia tree, about 7 ft. above the ground. August 14th—eggs stolen.

### 8. The Red-whiskered Bulbul: *Otocompsa jocosca emeria* (Linn.).

July 24th 1938 and several following days—a small and newly fledged bulbul was about the garden; its red 'whiskers' seemed absent, and the red of the vent was a pale yellowish scarlet. A parent bird was observed feeding this young one.

### 9. The White-browed Bulbul: *Pycnonotus leucolus leucolus* (Lesson).

August 15th 1938—nest in gmelina bush in garden; two very newly hatched chicks. August 23rd—one of these chicks observed